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(54) IP multicast services over an ATM network

(57) A method and apparatus reduce bandwidth usage in an ATM switching network (14) by controlling bandwidth used for IP multicasting through the switching network. Bandwidth usage is controlled by modifying ingress and access modules, such as IP service gateways (28) and access modules (18a,b) that terminate branches of a multicast tree. If a join request is received at an IP service gateway from a sink node (12a-f) served by an access module, the IP service gateway instructs

the access module to graft a leaf to the branch to join the sink node to the tree and to merge the multicast packets with other IP packets for the sink node. Consequently, only one connection (38a,b) carrying the multicast traffic is required between the IP service gateway and the access module. Bandwidth usage in the ATM switching network is thereby controlled, and bandwidth usage in service access trunks connecting the access modules to the ATM switching network is reduced.

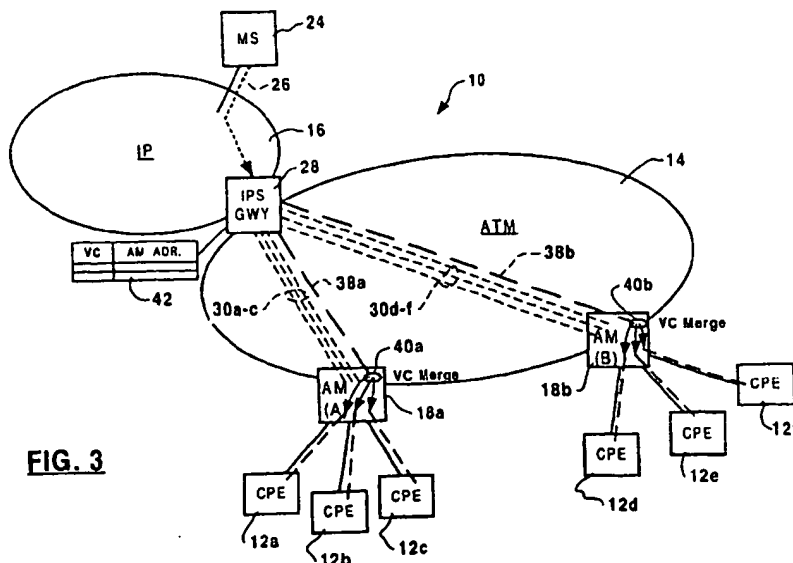


FIG. 3

EP 1 133 117 A3



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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

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EP 01 30 2197

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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 1 April 2003	Examiner Gregori, S
<p>CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS</p> <p>X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document</p> <p>T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document</p>			

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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
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